

# WALKS IN KIMPTON PARISH

## WALK 1 KIMPTON TO AYOT ST LAWRENCE HISTORIC WALK

**8.5km/5ml** circular walk on footpaths with lots of historic interest. Stiles.

**Approx time:** 2 hours

**Refreshments:** The White Horse Pub & The Boot, Kimpton; The Brocket Arms, Ayot St Lawrence

**Park** on High Street, near the Recreation Ground – grid ref: TL177184

- ❖ Walk up Church Lane. Go through the churchyard with the church on your left. The church is open during the day, so please pop in and have a look round.
- ❖ Go through the gate at the other end of the churchyard on to Hitchin Road.
- ❖ Walk up this sometimes busy road – TAKE GREAT CARE – cross over carefully where the road bends to the right to go up Hoo Road. This is marked Private Road, but is a public right of way. Very infrequent traffic. In summer this road is lined with field scabious and knapweed attracting bees and butterflies on sunny days.
- ❖ At the top you will come to a line of sweet chestnut trees (look out for edible chestnuts in the Autumn). Turn right after the first tree through a kissing gate and take the left of the 2 paths (marked Hertfordshire Way).



- ❖ Walk across the field with the old cricket pavilion on your left. This pavilion was originally thatched and was sited in the Recreation Ground. It was moved to its present site in the late 1940's where it is used by private clubs, including some celebrities!
- ❖ Go straight on through the kissing gate. The path runs next to the fence but is often overgrown. If so, skirt round the trees but be careful not to miss the next kissing gate at the end of the wood.
- ❖ After the gate, go straight ahead, following the path along the edge of the field. You might catch a glimpse of the new houses on your left which have been built on the site of The Hoo. This former grand mansion was the home of the Dacre family until it was demolished in the 1950's. For more information on the Dacres, see [www.kimpton.org.uk/history](http://www.kimpton.org.uk/history).
- ❖ Go through another kissing gate at the end of the wood on your left, then cross the field to the bottom of the hill where you will go through the kissing gate and turn right over the bridge. This bridge has been recently restored – although there is no water underneath now, it used to cross a lake which was made by the Dacres. It is thought to have dried up in the 1930's.
- ❖ When you reach the end of the shingle drive turn right and immediately right again along the bridleway. This path joins the course of the River Mimram.
- ❖ At the white painted houses, carry on along the track or take a short detour to the right to cross the bridge and look at Rye End Farmhouse – a beautiful 17th century building. Return to the track.

- ❖ Bear right at the end of the track and walk to the end of the road to the bridge where you will see Kimpton Mill. This mill used to provide flour for Kimpton (the mill which served Codicote is further downstream) but is now a private house.



- ❖
  - TAKE CARE CROSSING THE ROAD

- ❖ Follow the bridleway up the hill for about 1 km; this path follows the Parish boundary up to the point where it bends to the left. Carry on and at the end turn right along the road then left signposted Ayot Manor House. Go past Ayot Manor. This house dates back to Tudor times – Henry VIII reputedly courted Catherine Parr here after he had locked up Anne Boleyn in a dark room in the roof! This track takes you to Ayot St Lawrence – at the end turn right to walk through the village.

- ❖ At this point you may want to take time to visit Shaw’s Corner (about 100m further on), the home of Bernard Shaw. The property is owned by the National Trust and is open to the public during the summer.



- ❖ To continue back towards Kimpton, take the footpath on the right just past the ruined church, next to “Ruins Cottage” then the path straight ahead of you towards Ayot St Lawrence Church. This church was built in 1778 by Sir Lyonel Lyde – you will see his tomb and that of his wife’s on either side of the building. It is said that, having had an unhappy marriage, he vowed that as the church

had united them in life, it should make amends by separating them in death! The exterior of the building belies the beautiful interior – it is open daily, so please go in and find out more about the building and the history of Ayot St Lawrence.

- ❖ Cross the stile (with dog gate) opposite the church gate and keep to the left of the field until, after 200m, you reach the stile (with dog gate) at the far left corner. Dog owners beware – there are usually sheep in this field.
- ❖ The path goes through a newly planted wood – cross the next stile (dog gate, but perhaps not suitable for very large or not very nimble dogs!) and go through the coniferous wood up the hill and across the field to the road.
- ❖ TAKE CARE CROSSING THIS ROAD
- ❖ Climb up the bank opposite and take the permissive path to the right. Follow it round the field until you reach the top of the Recreation Ground (you will see the back of the football pavilion on your right).
- ❖ Go down the steps and back down to the High Street.

*This series of walks has been produced by Catherine Tees, Kimpton Rights of Way Committee.*

*It is our aim to keep rights of way in the Parish clear of obstructions, well marked and easy to walk. We hope that this walk will encourage you to use the paths in the Parish and explore our beautiful countryside. Please report any errors in directions, or any problems with paths to Catherine Tees, via [www.kimpton.org.uk](http://www.kimpton.org.uk) or to Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way Section.*